

BACKHAWK 221

BOARD OF INQUIRY

STATEMENT OF CARINNA PORTER

I, Carinna Porter of [REDACTED] state as follows:

1. I am the widow of Trooper Joshua Porter ("Josh").
2. At the time of Josh's death I was pregnant with our daughter Maddison, who was born on 10th may 2007.
3. Josh was a devoted and loving husband. We discovered that I was pregnant only shortly before he deployed on OP QUICKSTEP. He was extremely excited at the prospect of becoming a father.
4. In addition to being a loving and devoted husband, Josh was a committed and loyal member of the Australian Defence Force. He was a particularly devoted and proud member of the SAS. He accepted that his job was a dangerous one. He and I discussed the risks involved in his job, but you can never really prepare yourself for the possibility of losing them. And you always believe that it will never happen to you.
5. The fact that Josh never got to see his beautiful little girl, Maddison, is a matter of added sadness for me in what has been an extremely difficult time, although I am grateful that at least he knew of the fact that I was pregnant before he died.
6. I have been given strength by the wonderful support I have received from the SAS Community. In particular I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Sgt AB for the huge support he has given to me since Josh's death. Sgt AB, who was Josh's Troop Sergeant, did not know me before Josh died, but had been someone Josh would speak about fondly. Since the accident, Sgt AB has been an ongoing support to me on a continuous basis often ringing and visiting me to see if I needed anything and buying gifts for Maddison. His commitment to support and help me in this difficult time is a testament to the strength of the bond of loyalty between SAS Troopers.
7. I have found the process of the Board of Inquiry to be extremely helpful in understanding what happened to Josh and why it happened, although I will always wonder what was happening to Josh in those last few moments whilst the aircraft sank.

8. I have come to realise that Captain Mark Bingley was a talented, dedicated and respected Black Hawk pilot and due to many unfortunate circumstances his life was also lost in this tragedy. It is clear that there was a considerable amount of mutual respect between Captain Mark Bingley and the SAS personnel who flew with him.
9. It is my hope that the question of incorporation of emergency flotation devices for Black Hawk's be fully investigated. I would hate to see another Black Hawk sink in the future with consequent loss of life and hope that the lessons learnt from this accident will mean that won't happen in the future.

Dated the 31st day of July 2007.

Carinna Porter